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CHALLENGE

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No free speech for racists

ARMY OF ANTIRACISTS OVERPOWERS KLAN

A protester takes the lead in confronting some stray Trump supporters in the crowd.

WASHINGTON, DC, August 12—A pathetic count of 24 white supremacists showed up at the "Unite the Right" rally. Thousands of antiracists came to oppose them. This morning was the one-year anniversary of the Charlottesville rally where Heather Heyer was murdered by a white supremacist. Progressive Labor Party and friends interjected the mass liberal politics with the communist idea of "no free speech for racists." Many followed the Party's multiracial lead.

Transit workers blast the Klan

A multiracial PLP continent of 50 met up with several Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) union workers and other members of labor unions in front of the AFL-CIO headquarters. One transit worker from Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) gave a speech attacking the racist ideology of the Ku Klux Klan. Another protester read a statement of solidarity with the anti-racist Metro workers (see page 3).

The transit union knew the mainly Black workforce would be, to say the least, unwilling to transport the white supremacists. So, the ATU put out an official statement saying they would refuse to give the racists any type of special treatment and would not be driving any trains to get them to the rally.

However, a union member was forced into driving a train. The police commander took over a single car for white supremacists and the press. Union misleaders were present yet did nothing to stop the transport of racists. The driver of the train was an ATU 689 member and the union officers present did not intervene. The Metro police protected and allowed for the racists to have a secure, heavily guarded ride in an empty train car. So much for the "leadership" of the Metro union.

There was a follow-up protest by ATU 689 in the aftermath of the August 12 rally demanding, "General Manager, Paul Wiedefeld's termination for breaking the public trust and giving special accommodations to white supremacists on Sunday."

Communist-led antiracists would have been able to effectively shut down the trains

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JOIN THE INTERNATIONAL FIGHT FOR COMMUNIST REVOLUTION

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OUR FIGHT

☆Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.

☆The dictatorship of the working class — communism—can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today's world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.

☆Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world's workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.

☆While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.

☆Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. While capitalism needs unemployment, communism needs everyone to contribute and share in society's benefits and burdens.

☆Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of "race." Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit Black, Latin, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.

☆Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women— sexism—and divisive gender roles created by the class society.

☆Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

☆Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion's false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.

☆Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

CONTACT US

Email
desafio.challenge@gmail.com
Mail
Box 808 GPO, Brooklyn, NY 11202
Internet
www.plp.org
challengenewspaper.wordpress.com
Twitter: @PLPchallenge
Facebook: Challenge Desafio

WHO WRITES FOR CHALLENGE?

CHALLENGE is for the working class, produced by the working class. The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP's criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a "following" around any particular individual.

While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual's writing of an article.

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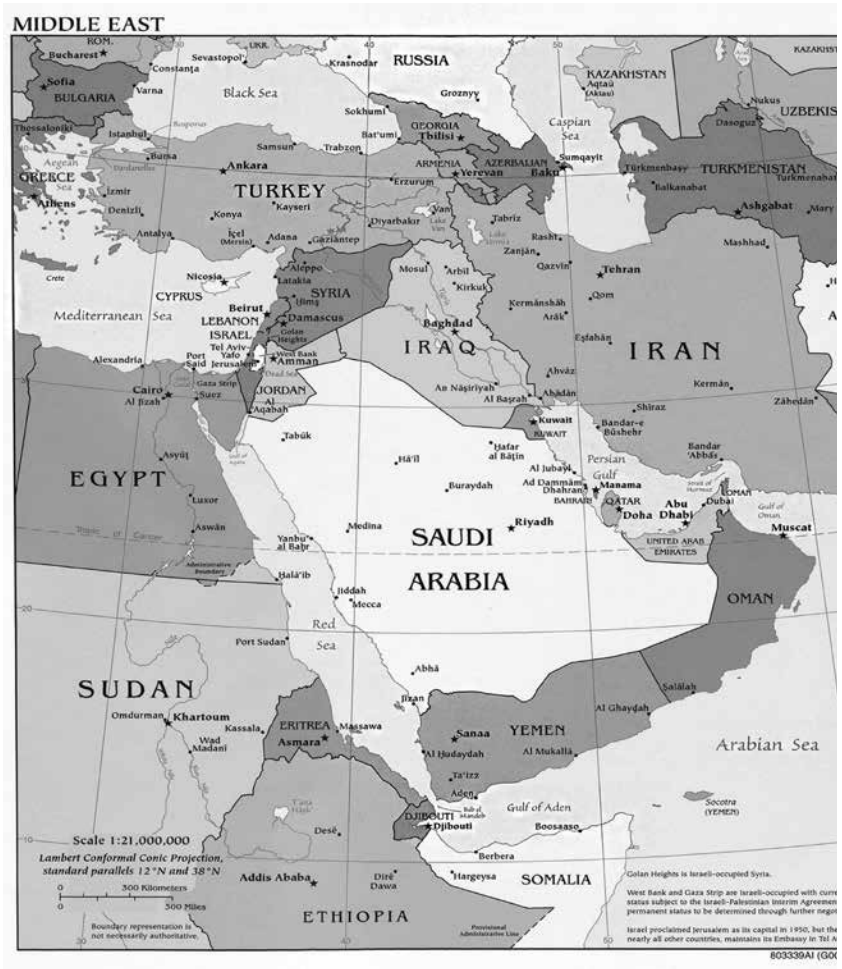
Editorial

Amid U.S. decline
Turkey in crisis pivots to Russia



Turkey's currency, the lira, has plunged more than 20 percent against the U.S. dollar in the last two weeks and over 40 percent since the beginning of the year. The crisis is driven by sharpening contradictions between Turkish and U.S. bosses as the post-World War II order disintegrates. In the face of the U.S. rulers' weakening grip, Turkey is moving closer to Russia. In response, U.S. President Donald Trump has used the arrest of an American evangelical pastor, Andrew Brunson, as an excuse to raise tariffs on Turkish goods and further pressure the lira by sowing doubts about the stability of the Turkish economy.

While U.S. imperialism stands in relative decline versus a rising China and resurgent Russia, it will never give up its empire without an all-out global fight. History shows that trade wars inevitably lead to shooting wars. The international working class, led by the Progressive Labor Party, must reject the bosses' wars pitting workers against workers. Our class must fight for a communist society that serves the needs of the international working class.

Turkey's Pivot to Russia

Turkey sits between Europe and the Middle East and is a crucial counterweight to Russian client Iran. It fields the second largest armed forces in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the military arm of U.S. geopolitical dominance for the last seven decades. Once a reliable ally of the U.S., Turkey has of late strained the partnership by focusing on its own national interest and pivoting toward Russia. Within the last two years, according to Stratfor (8/12), Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has:

- Arrested U.S. citizens as bargaining chips with Washington since the attempted coup against Erdogan's government in July, 2016;
- Purchased a Russian S-400 missile defense system;
- Ignored U.S. sanctions against Iran, which Turkey depends on for fossil fuels;
- Attacked U.S.-backed Kurdish militias in neighboring Syria.

The decay of U.S.-Turkey relations represents another sign of the U.S. bosses' declining position in the Middle East and the growing instability and volatility of the period. Donald Trump's economic sanctions—doubling tariffs on Turkish steel to 50 percent and on aluminum to 20 percent—have intensified the crisis, leading the defiant Erdogan to a counter-threat: "...Turkey has alternatives. Failures to reverse this trend of unilateralism and disrespect will require U.S to start looking for new friends and allies" (New York Times, 8/10).

No capitalist solutions for the working class

Due to a reliance on foreign currency and an inability to pay back its debt in U.S. dollars, the Turkish economy is vulnerable to attacks from the U.S. bosses. The falling value of the lira has severely hurt the savings, pensions, and paychecks of workers in Turkey. Annual inflation now stands at 15 percent and could soon rise even higher (NYT, 8/14).

Much like Trump, Erdogan has thrown out or marginalized professional Turkish economists and is running the economy for his own political future and survival. If Erdogan props up the lira by raising interest rates, fewer businesses could afford bank loans and Turkey's growth rate would plummet, leading to even more unemployment.

If interest rates stay low and inflation gets even worse, workers' wages—already inadequate for the necessities of life—will be worth even less. There are no capitalist solutions that serve the needs of the working class.

Adding to the volatility of the Turkish-U.S. conflict is the fact that both sets of bosses are under intense pressure, both internally and externally. To fend off opposing bosses who were jailed or ousted from the government after the failed coup, the Erdogan wing held snap elections that hurt the government's legitimacy with many workers (Washington Post, 6/25). Now rising prices are being used by Erdogan's competitors to unite an opposition movement.

U.S. decay paves the Way for war

While the relationship between the U.S. bosses and the Turkish ruling class continues to deteriorate, capitalists around the globe are sizing up the situation to improve their own positions. Iran continues to strengthen its oil-based ties with Turkey. Qatar came to Erdogan's aid with a promise of $15 billion to back the lira. The announcement temporarily stabilized the currency and may open the door to investments from other powers: "That Turkish support for Qatar during the stand-off with Saudi Arabia finally paid off.…Let's see if the Chinese and Russians put some money on the table" (Bloomberg, 8/15).

Turkey's strategic location makes it a prime target for China's One Belt, One Road Initiative. A China state publication backed the development of more projects on Turkish soil to exploit Erdogan's rift with the U.S. (Global Times, 8/20).

We Don't Warn of Peace

Turkey's shift toward Iran and Russia is another sign of the decline of U.S. imperialism, which has been accelerated by Trump's turn toward isolationism. Inter-imperialist rivalry is growing more volatile by the day. Sooner or later, one of these situations will spiral out of control and into massive global warfare. None of the capitalist bosses' politicians—including the latest wave of "socialists" in the U.S. Democratic Party—can stop this historic inevitability toward chaos and destruction. The only way forward is to rely on the power of the international working class—and to develop a communist society based on the needs of the many, not the profits of the few. We can build a new world without racism, sexism, exploitation, or imperialist war. Join us!✪

Teachers' strike vote authorization, potential to raise class consciousness

LOS ANGELES, August 23—The teachers' union UTLA is taking a strike authorization vote to demand smaller class sizes, funding for "community schools," and salary increases. Class sizes in regular subjects are now 42 students per class. In some subjects, it is as high as 55. Many schools have nurses and psychologists only one or two days a week. Working-class Black and Latin students are hit the hardest. Extremely segregated schools, and decades of racist policies against Black and Latin students and communities, has resulted in large racist disparities in education. As Progressive Labor Party always asserted, the teachers' working conditions are the students learning conditions.

Additionally, teachers struggle with the cost of living and are desperate to get whatever the bosses give them. On average, teachers in California make $4,000 less per year than the national average for teachers, yet cost of living in Los Angeles is 43 percent higher than the national average. The bosses' media attacked teachers, claiming they are getting overpaid, and that raising salaries and school funding would "lead to insolvency and state takeover."

The best way to have an education system worthy of the working class is to overthrow the ruling class through communist revolution. Only under communism will students achieve a meaningful education that will serve our class. In the meantime PLP will help lead the organizing around this potential strike with our students, their families and other school workers. Through fighting to give schools our students deserve, the LA working class can realize the power we have and our potential to lead society.

Beutner serves the ruling class

The new LA Unified Schools District (LAUSD) Superintendent Austin Beutner is ready to "prevent a strike, which will harm students, families and the communities we serve" (Los Angeles Times, 8/28). This is the typical rhetoric used by the ruling class to divide the working class in order to convince us that it is not in our interest to fight together against the system. Capitalism is the enemy of the whole working class, teachers, parents and students alike.

Beutner is no friend of working-class students and families. He was an investment banker, has no experience managing a school or district, and used to work for then-mayor Antonio Villaraigosa (a well-known enemy of the working class in LA). Beutner was also a board member for Inner City Education Foundation's Public Schools, a charter group with schools in south LA. Many pro-charter groups lobbied for him to become superintendent, and one of the school board members responsible for hiring him was Ref Rodriguez, a charter school

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Demands from Education Workers

"The teachers union wants a 6.5% raise retroactive to July 1, 2016, and possible raises over the following three years. The union also is calling for reduced class sizes, for 'ending overtesting' of students and 'placing reasonable accountability measures' on independently operated charter schools, most of which are nonunion" (Los Angeles Times, 8/3).

No free speech for racists; antiracists overpower the klan!

Continued from page 1

and busses to ensure that no racist rides on public transit. The city spent $2.6 million protecting these fascists and their freedom of racist speech. (Yet, They want to raise fares, cut service, cut workers' benefits and freeze wages. It shows Metro's priorities.) This is the equivalent of promoting hate speech and racist violence. PLP knows that racist speech leads to racist violence.

No free speech for racists

The PLP communist contingent marched over to the rally at Lafayette Park, across the street from the White House. Fencing lined the park, with a 75-yard gap in the middle to keep the racist scum safe and to keep the counter protesters far enough away so that no brick or bottle thrown could hit its intended target. This sizable distance also kept the Nazis from being heard by anyone except the cops and members of their own group.

In the blazing sun, we distributed over 600 CHALLENGEs and had a welcoming and encouraging response. When the racist Nazi scum finally showed up, we led chants and were joined by those around us. Later, a liberal woman attempted to silence our bullhorn when PLP led the chant, "The cops, the courts, the Ku Klux Klan, all are a part of the bosses plan!" She was unsuccessful.

One protester took the lead in confronting some stray Trump supporters who were against "left-wing violence" (see bottom photo, page 1). The crowd and PLP followed his antiracist lead. The racists eventually left the park, despite being protected by a team of "de-escalators", who believed that all views (racist or otherwise) should be allowed. The argument for free speech is one that allows, promotes, and protects racists and fascists. No free speech for racists!

After much chanting and a timely rainfall, PLP, friends, and many protesters departed, knowing that we had successfully suppressed the racist message of the Trump supporters.

More fights to come

For the past 40 years, DC has never been a hub for racist and fascist groups. This is largely due the city's history of beating, chasing, and drowning out racists every time they come, many times led by PLP. Today, many restaurants had signs refusing service to white nationalists. Uber and Lyft drivers also refused service. There is clearly a history of antiracist consciousness among workers here. It's up to communists to turn those antiracist actions into an international class-consciousness.

There are still many battles to come, and we must be prepared for them. We have our work cut out for us. We must take a stand wherever and whenever a racist or fascist rears its ugly head. We will shut them down and chase them out. Fighting back against racism and fascism isn't a choice to be taken lightly; this is about the survival and well being of the entire working class. Fight for communism, power to the workers!✪

Mass statement of solidarity with workers at ATU Local 689

We stand in strong solidarity with our sisters & brothers at ATU Local 689 who have refused to provide special transportation for KKK-affiliated hate groupsrallying in Washington this weekend.

WMATA, the DC area's transit authority, had initially considered providing these hate groups with their own private Metro rail cars and police escort to and from the rally.

Our community has already seen first-hand what happens when racist terror groups organize. In May 2017, local white supremacist Jeremy Christian committed a racist hate crime by attacking two young Muslim women on MAX, and then viciously stabbing the three heroes who stood up to him, killing Ricky Best & Taliesin Myrddin Namkai-Meche, and wounding Micah Fletcher.

What you may not know is that, just one month before the murders on MAX, TriMet provided special transportation for members of these hate groups as they rallied on NE 82nd Avenue in April 2017. One of the people who took them up on that free ride: Jeremy Christian, before his hate crime was seared into our community's memory.

As the old saying goes: you cannot be neutral on a moving train. The hate peddled by the groups who are preparing to rally this weekend in Washington, DC is disgusting, racist, violent, and goes against the basic principles of our labor movement.

Our sisters & brothers at Local 689 have bravely stood up to say that they will not be complicit in allowing these racist groups to organize.

We proudly stand with them.

Justice for Robert White – defeat racism everywhere!

SILVER SPRING, MD—Over 100 Montgomery County residents held a multiracial rally and march protesting the racist police murder of Robert White, a 41 year old mentally ill Black man on June 13. His crime? Walking while Black. Progressive Labor Party (PLP)distributed leaflets and connected the murderous Ku Klux Klan and the killer cops as part of the racist state power that must be overthrown with multiracial communist revolution.

The prosecutor ruled Robert's murder was justified and released body camera footage of the encounter. The cameras show that the police officer, Anand Badgujar, got out of his car and started following Robert who was walking in his neighborhood as he did daily. Robert became agitated with the cop, and understandably so, because there was no real reason to stop him. The officer persisted, harassing him and even using pepper spray on him.

Kkop Badgujar claimed Robert knocked him down and continuosly hit him, so he responded by shooting him instead of backing off and de-escalating the unjustified confrontation. At one point on the video evidence showed footage of, Badgujar saying, "This looks like suicide by cop" and called for backup. Despite thisProsecutor Broccolino stated, "We have, unanimously, concluded that [the officer's] actions were justified under the circumstances," and closed the case.

Mental illness is not a crime

Speakers from the community who knew Robert White were incensed that he was harassed and then killed simply for "looking suspicious." A neighbor from the Silver Spring Justice Coalition said that she walks the same routes.

Robert often exchanged pleasantries with him at the store or library. No one had called the police to investigate. He walked the neighborhood daily.

He lived with his mother and father (retired school teacher and minister) and had no history of violence. Mental illness is not a crime. Walking is not a crime. Robert just "wanted to be left alone" as one speaker put it, and their is no crime in that. But don't tell the bosses' racist media that!

This rally followed a protest held in June at the time of the murder that highlighted the murder's systemic, racist nature, even at the hands of a non-White cop. At that protest, Lakshmi Sridaran, Director of National Policy and Advocacy of South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT) declared, "It is unfortunate that in this case [the cop] is a South Asian American and we will not stand behind that person simply because of their identity."

After all, it is every cop's ultimate task—whether they're Black, white, Latin, or South Asian—to protect this rotten capitalist system at workers' expense.

Another speaker, mother to Emmanuel Okutuga, who was murdered by cop Christopher Jordan of the same police force in February 2011, spoke passionately about the need to fight for justice and called on the Black community to realize that this can happen to them also.

Her son was about to graduate from college at Bowie State University. Video showed he was not a threat. Somehow, though, the prosecutor's office "accidently" deleted the video and left the judge free to rule in favor of cop Jordan, calling the death "justifiable homicide."

Montgomery County borders Washington, D.C. and appears, on the surface, not to have the level of police brutality and murder that has characterized its neighboring Prince George's County. But the police play the same role everywhere.

Robert's case echoes the murder of Michael Brown in Ferguson—murdered for walking while Black. The struggle against racist police terror will continue under capitalism until all workers unite to create a communist world.✪

As U.S. imperialism weakens, Middle East proxy wars fill void

While U.S. imperialism is losing its grip on the Middle East, regional capitalists are at war to fill the vacuum. From Syria to Yemen, millions of workers' lives are at stake as Israeli, Saudi and Iranian capitalists wage war to control the Middle East and its oil. The U.S. and Russian imperialists are providing military and political support to opposing sides in these wars that could escalate quickly.

The most destructive of these current conflicts are in Syria and Yemen. At least six million Syrians have fled their homes and at least 400,000 have died since 2012. In Yemen, at least six million are on the edge of starvation and over half a million were devastated in the world's worst-ever cholera epidemic (NYT, 8/22). In both conflicts, U.S. imperialism has been mostly confined to fighting small-time terrorists (ISIS in Syria, Al Qaeda in Yemen).

The U.S. decline has their allies second-guessing U.S. power. This has created an opening for capitalists like Iran and Russia who oppose the U.S., Israel, and Saudi Arabia, have decided to take matters into their own hands, creating more murder and mayhem.

Syria: Iran and Russia Advance Israel Readies for War

With U.S. influence weakening in the Middle East, both presidents Barack Obama and Donald Trump have done little to oppose Syria's Russia-backed President Bashar al-Assad. Meanwhile, Iran and Russia have moved in, concentrating on propping up Assad's regime. Russia has deployed significant air power while Iran has recruited 80,000 fighters from across the region.

Assad's Syrian army only numbers about 20,000, and many desert or go on strike if ordered to deploy outside their own neighborhoods, where they serve as guards.

When news reports talk about a Syrian advance on rebel positions, the advance is led by Lebanese Hezbollah and units recruited, trained and paid for by Iran.

Despite Trump's rhetoric and sanctions against Iran, he has not taken on Iran in Syria and pushed to withdraw all 2,000 troops in Syria (NYT, 4/4). "In his haste to withdraw from Syria, Trump stands alone.

The Pentagon, the State Department and CIA are all deeply concerned about the potential ramifications if the U.S. leaves behind a power vacuum in Syria, as are Israel, Arab leaders, and other nations in the U.S.-led coalition that has fought ISIS in Iraq and Syria since 2014" (Military Times, 4/4).

If U.S. backs off, Israeli and Saudi bosses fear that Russia-backed Iran will become the dominant power across Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon.

Yemen: Saudi Tail Wags U.S. Dog

In Yemen as in Syria, U.S. bosses are not calling the shots as a war unfolds. In 2015, the Saudis and United Arab Emirates invaded after Iran-backed Houthis seized the capital of Sana'a. The latest outrage has been their assault on the main port of Hodeidah. "The U.A.E…wants the port out of Houthi hands as soon as possible, saying it generates up to $40 million a month for the Houthis" (WSJ, 7/8).

It's important to note that though the UAE is one of the smallest countries in this region, it is one with a growing imperialist appetite. "With an active-duty military of just 63,000, the U.A.E. has rapidly expanded its footprint across the Arabian Peninsula and eastern Africa.

It has a string of bases in Somalia and Eritrea and along the Yemen coast" (WSJ, 7/8)The principal weapon in Syria has been mass starvation created by attacking shipping routes so as to deprive millions of Yemenis of food and clean water.

This murderous campaign has been financed and equipped by the U.S. war machine.The UN estimates this attack will lead to 250,000 deaths from the resulting food shortages.

To stop this slaughter of profit-hungry rulers, we must oppose all capitalist and turn their imperialist wars into class wars against all bosses.

We must rebuild the international communist movement, overthrow all the war makers, and organize a society run by the working class.✪

Racism rises in Italy, workers strike in the name of Soumaila Sacko

Just two days after the installation of the new government, Malian organizer of agricultural workers, Soumaila Sacko, was murdered. How will the working class in Italy respond to rising fascism?

ROME, August 5—"Italians first! "Immigrants, go home!" The racist movements we see around the world—from Myanmar to Hungary to the U.S.—flourishes in Italy. At the same time, workers are fighting back. At the forefront of this fight are African migrant workers.

Matteo Salvini, the leader of la Lega, Italy's most overtly anti-immigrant political party, refuses to allow boatloads of African refugees rescued at sea onto Italy's shores. In the last two months alone, 850 have died in the Mediterranean trying to reach Europe. "No sooner had Salvini been sworn in than he was proclaiming his eagerness to kick out the 500,000-600,000 immigrants who are reckoned to be living without authorisation in Italy" (The Economist, 6/7).

The need for proletarian internationalism is urgent. The need for revolutionary, proletarian internationalism is urgent. We must fight to welcome refugees and immigrants wherever we are. We must organize to better the working and living conditions of all workers. But really, the whole damn capitalist system has to go!

Sixty percent of Italians elected the coalition of the Lega and the Five Star Movement, founded by the comedian Beppe Grillo and led by Luigi di Maio. Although some cracks are appearing in this coalition—the Five Star Movement pretends to distance itself from the Lega's blatant racism—together the two parties control the "populista', or "populist" government.

Since citizenship in Italy is determined by blood rather than soil, the populists want benefits restricted to native Italians only. This political line is blatantly anti-immigrant and racist. But the proposed 15 percent flat tax rate would benefit only the rich, while sharply reducing revenues for working-class education and healthcare.

Rulers scapegoat immigrants

The Lega-Five Star coalition is a ruling-class strategy to control an increasingly alienated working class by scapegoating immigrants as the source of its problems. The pensions of Italian workers have been cut to the bone. Immigrants serve as super-exploited labor and as scapegoats to bolster the racism that divides the working class.

Thus, immigrant workers, many from sub-Saharan Africa, labor in the fields of southern Italy for three euros (about $4) an hour under slave-like conditions, or toil as precarious labor in the northern factories.

In fact the director of Italian Social Security said the system would collapse without the taxes paid by immigrant workers, most of whom will never receive a pension.

Racist murder of organizer, Soumaila Sacko

Just two days after the installation of the new government, a 29-year-old Malian organizer of agricultural workers, Soumaila Sacko, was murdered. This sparked a strike and large union-led protests throughout the country (The Local It, 6/4).

He had lived in a tent city of San Fernando in Reggio Calabria, an encampment at least 3,000 of migrant workers— primarily from Mali, Senegal, Gambia, Guinea and the Ivory Coast—who pick fruits and vegetables for abysmal wages. They are deprived of electricity, running water, and proper toilets.

The protesters correctly pointed out that this is nothing new. "In 2010, migrant workers staged a revolt against the conditions after three labourers were injured in a [racist] street shooting as they returned from the fields. Hundreds of migrants were expelled from an area nearby in what some commentators called ethnic cleansing" (Al Jazeera, 6/27).

Capitalism in global crisis

The bosses' attacks on workers lays bare the instability of global capitalism. The top owners of European capital want the European Union (EU) to survive.

For six decades, the EU has enabled capital, goods, services, and labor to flow across borders. This created an economic bloc conjoining the interests of the capitalists in different European nations. Yet these bankers and industrialists also benefit from the divisive nationalist movement, enabling them to keep wages low and cut public expenditures. European capitalists need the EU at the same time that they need the nationalist movements opposed to the EU. As Marx pointed out in *Das Kapital* 150 years ago, capitalism creates contradictions that it cannot resolve.

Fascism or communism?

How will the Italian working class respond to rising fascism? History provides no clear guidelines. Benito Mussolini was first to usher in fascism in 1920s-1930s led by. But the anti-fascist movement was strong throughout World War II; in the late 1940s, Italy had the continent's largest and most militant Communist Party.

To this day, communist songs—"Bella Ciao," "Bandiera Rossa," and the "Internationale"—are sung at protests against the current right-wing trend. But the old Communist movement, led by the PCI (Partita Comunista Italiana) strangled itself with its commitment to work within electoral politics.

The capitalist crisis is global, but workers often think nationally—which means their response can be easily misdirected in the direction of racist, xenophobic "populismo."

Only revolutionary proletarian internationalism can meet the needs of the workers of Italy—and of the world. There is a desperate need for PLP, in Italy and everywhere, to organize the class struggle and lead the communist transformation of society.✪

Potential for LA teacher to strike

Continued from page 3

backed ruling-class criminal convicted of laundering at least $25,000 in public education funds.

It is no secret that Beutner's role is to cut funding for public schools and continue to attack students and working-class families. Charter schools have been used to divide student populations into two groups: those who will serve the ruling class in "management" positions, and those who will remain super-exploited workers. In essence, they increase racist exploitation and divisions in order to serve capitalism.

Working-class anger bubbles up

All this has angered students, parents and teachers, especially in working-class Black and Latin schools. Many are ready to fight back. The teachers union is using this righteous anger to "bargain for a better contract" with the school district. As usual, they are attempting to divert our anger away from our true enemies —the ruling class and the racist, exploitative system of capitalism—and focus it on getting a pay raise and a few concessions. Let's not be taken for a fools by neither the bosses rhetoric,or by the union misleaders.

Our enemy is capitalism, which serves the interests of the ruling class by suppressing the interests of working class teachers, students and families. The only way to combat it is to fight as a united working class. We must strike, not to "bargain" with the capitalists, but to take the power back from them. The more the working-class struggle refuses to be contained within the bosses' parameters, the more our class—students, parents, and teachers—will learn class-consciousness. No classroom can provide that experience or lesson.

The Progressive Labor Party and friends here will fight hard in the reform movement and use these struggles as a school for communism. Stay tuned for all the exciting details to come. Fight for communism! Power to the working class!✪

LETTERS

We encourage all CHALLENGE readers to send in letters and articles about their experiences fighting the bosses worldwide.

Rally against racist hate

On August 12, in front of Santa Monica City Hall, a small but enthusiastic group from our church gathered to rally against racism and fascism and in solidarity with the anti-fascist protestors in Washington, DC and Charlottesville.

We had a multiracial group of workers with signs and a bullhorn for chants and speeches. We chanted the names of workers killed by police and other fascists. A couple of people spoke on the bullhorn as we marched around the block and through a nearby park.

One gave the following speech:"On the anniversary of the fascist attacks of Charlottesville, and the Unite the Right 2 rally in Washington, DC, we stand up against racist and fascist attacks in our communities and around the world.

Last summer members of alt-right groups attacked the Committee for Racial Justice. Over the past few months our Black Lives Matter banner has been vandalized multiple times.

We will not tolerate hate in our communities that leads to violent attacks like the killing of Heather Heyer in Charlottesville."A few families came up and thanked us for being there and joined us for a few minutes. Next time, we will hand out flyers.

★★★★★

Greece: massive wildfire kills more than 80

I was vacationing in Athens when massive wildfires hit Greece outside of Athens. These 87 deaths were mostly preventable and reflect massive cuts imposed by the European Union (E.U) austerity program on both firefighters and firefighting equipment.Greece had to call in outside support for airplanes and helicopters capable of dropping fire retardants. Alex Tsipras, the traitorous Greek President who brokered the austerity deal, also failed to call for aid early enough to save many lives. Now they are deflecting the culpability of the capitalist class for this crime by blaming it on possible arson.

There are few tragedies in this world that are "accidents". Most are the result of human activity and most human activity such as production and allocation of resources is in the hands of the capitalist class. Only a rank and file organized mass movement that embraces egalitarian communist ideas and leadership can bring safety and security to our class. Let us build the Progressive Labor Party in Greece and around the world. Based on conversations I had with many Greek workers during my stay I am convinced there is a strong desire for a revolutionary alternative for the working class here. I distributed several issues of CHALLENGE to taxi drivers and other workers.

★★★★★

U.S. bombs Japan as a threat to Soviet Union

The letter to CHALLENGE (8/29) about the U.S. dropping the atomic bombs on Japan was absolutely right; that it was done as a threat to the Soviet Union not to challenge U.S. imperialism's world dominance, not to "save U.S. lives" and end the war. Here are some evidence that confirms that:

A-Bomb scientist Leo Szilard, meeting with Truman's Secretary of State James Byrnes, recalled that "Mr. Byrnes did not argue that it was necessary to use the bomb…in order to win the war" but "that our possessing and demonstrating the bomb would make Russia more manageable in Europe" (Szilard, "A Personal History of the Atomic Bomb")

Even further, Byrnes told Truman's War Secretary Stimson that, "The atomic bomb might well put us in a position to dictate our own terms at the end of the war" (Truman: "Year of Decision").

Stimson called the bomb a "master card: "Let our actions speak for words. The Russians will understand them better than anything else" (Stimson Diary). Byrnes told Stimson that, "The atomic bomb might well put us in a position to dictate our own terms at the end of the war" (Truman: "Year of Decision").

The fact that the genocide that killed a quarter of a million Japanese civilians was not needed to "force Japan to surrender" and thereby "prevent one million U.S. casualties" was attested to by many sources:

- The U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey reported that, "Certainly…prior to November 1945, Japan would have surrendered even it the atomic bomb had not been dropped…and even if no invasion had been planned or contemplated." (Survey: "Japan's Struggle to End the War");
- "The hard truth is that the atomic bombings were unnecessary. A million lives were not saved. Indeed, McGeorge Bundy, the man who popularized this figure, later confessed that he had pulled it out of the air to justify the bombings in…an essay he had ghostwritten for… Stimson." (LA Times, 8/5/2005)
- President Harry Truman's diary referred to a decoded Japanese cable indicating Japan was about to surrender unconditionally, as [Japan's] Emperor [was] asking for peace."
- Truman also wrote that on July 17, 1945, three weeks before Hiroshima, he believed that the Soviet Union would "be in the Jap[anese] by August 15. Fini Jap[an] when that comes about." (In May 1945, at the Yalta Conference, Josef Stalin had promised Truman that the Red Army would enter the war against Japan within three months after the Nazi surrender in Europe. On August 8, 1945, the Soviets swept into Japanese-occupied Manchuria and were preparing an invasion of homeland Japan);
- General (later president) Dwight Eisenhower wrote "that Japan was already defeated and that dropping the bomb was completely unnecessary." (Eisenhower: "Mandate for Change";
- General Douglas MacArthur, U.S. Pacific commander believed the dropping of the bombs was "completely unnecessary from a military point of view." (James Clayton, "The Years of MacArthur, Vol. 2.)

Interestingly, Szilard stated that, "If the Germans had dropped atomic bombs on cities…we would have defined [it]…as a war crime, and we would have sentenced the Germans who were guilty of this crime to death at Nuremberg and hanged them."

★★★★★

AFSCME convention, leading workers into the enemys hands

BOSTON, July 20—If more than 6,000 members of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) met to discuss how to build a real fight against the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in the Janus case, then the meeting was a waste of time! The theme of this year's convention was "Rise Up." Rather than planning strikes against the racist and sexist attacks of the capitalist system, the AFSCME leadership along with invited leaders from the American Federation of Teachers and the Service Employees International Union mainly urged delegates and guests to elect "labor friendly" candidates. This has been the main failing strategy for decades as the percentage of unionized workers in the U.S. has dropped dramatically.

NYC Retirees came to the convention with a different plan. We wanted to build for a fight against the outrageous costs of prescription drugs. Working families and retirees often are forced to choose between paying for food, rent, or life sustaining prescriptions. This awful "choice" hits the hardest on Black, Latin, and single-mother families. According to Prescription Justice, 45 million people did not use prescribed medication due to costs (2/6/2017). In this fight, members of Progressive Labor Party argue that the capitalist system's failure to provide needed medications proves it does not deserve to exist.

Leading up to the convention, we had built support for demonstrations against the pharmaceutical industry in our retiree organization, in other retiree organizations and in AFSCME local unions. We fought for a resolution that said the costs of prescription drugs are too damn high. It called for unity across union lines and with workers not covered by unions. We argued that high costs of drugs imperiled Medicaid and Medicare programs and therefore endangered the people we serve. Our resolution passed but we know that this won't guarantee a fight.

As we headed home we made plans to make the high cost of drugs an issue in NYC's union Labor Day Parade and for a targeted demonstration at the headquarters of a pharmaceutical profiteer in October.✪

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Brooklyn: college BBQ celebrates multiracial unity

"Before I came here today I had no idea what was happening in Yemen. I had no idea that Yemen has such a disaster with cholera. None of the newspapers talk about it. People in Yemen have so much in common with people in my home country, Haiti. The US also tried to keep cholera a secret. It was regular people like us who spread the word. We need to keep having events like these, and all of us stick together."

—student

BROOKLYN, August 29—This summer, a multiracial group of more than 30 Kingsborough Community College students and workers held a beach barbecue called "Unity in the Community," to review and celebrate the past year of struggle, and plan for the year ahead. Short speeches summarizing the past year, political discussions about CHALLENGE, good food, and sports were the orders of the day as old friends reconnected and new friendships were kindled!

Anti-racist and anti-sexist political struggle are what unites these workers and students, who hailed from Africa, across the Middle East and South Asia, the Caribbean, and Latin America. Many of them participated in various struggles throughout the past year, while others were relative newcomers.

A year of building struggle

In late 2017, Kingsborough cafeteria workers suffered under incompetent and racist management. They endured the indignities of obeying orders from lazy sexist supervisors and incompetent administrators at the College. The workers, many of them parents, saw the absurdity of their working conditions. As we engaged in discussions over the semester, their political awareness began to grow, culminating in a bold and powerful rally. Students and staff banded together in a direct confrontation with administrators and NYPD at the President's office.

At the end that semester, we made contact and began to build relationships with students of the Muslim Association on campus. We learned of their struggles on campus. In the spring semester we built on those discussions to take action against a racist stooge of the administration who admitted to spying on the Muslim Association. Students took the lead in confronting the racist and the administrators who supported him, resulting in his ouster. The leadership in the Muslim Association has to deal with years of history of control by faculty and administrators as well as sexism in their own group. The success of this struggle led to the beginning of another struggle to call out and oust a racist, sexist and homophobic administrator on campus, Michael Goldstein, who is protected by a network of Zionists among the faculty.

Building collective leadership

Students at the barbecue explained the collective process that went into writing the leaflet calling for Goldstein's termination, and the collective decision-making that went into how best to distribute them and involve more students. A strength of the struggle against Goldstein is that it is drawing in and developing strong women leaders among students who have never participated in political struggle before.

PL'ers who have been involved alongside the KCC students and workers commented on the development of strong women leadership through the struggle, and talked about how important CHALLENGE has been in sharing news about these struggles among the students and workers on campus. They connected the cholera outbreaks in Yemen or Haiti to imperialist rivalry and capitalism's insatiable need for profits and labor to exploit. They stressed that the bosses' media always buries these stories, and that is why everyone must help sell and write for CHALLENGE. As students passed around CHALLENGE, several new contacts were made, as well as plans for new PLP study groups.

Struggle continues

Students and workers brainstormed on how to build on and sharpen the struggles of the previous year, and how to reach out to more of the 10,000 or so students on campus. They unanimously agreed that this event should be held annually! As one student put it, "we needed this. With everything going on in the world, we need to keep doing this every year for the students after us."

Political struggle shows that education is far more than just about sitting in a classroom and learning from books or lectures from professors. Political struggle gives us a vision of a world to fight for, and a goal for our education in all subjects.

This barbecue served to break down barriers and expand the bonds of solidarity among the segregated groups of students, as well as the workers who came: the custodial, cafeteria and faculty.

With stronger personal and political ties, we head back to school this semester with the promise of struggle and hopefully even greater victories.✪

RED EYE ON THE NEWS . . .

Below are excerpts from mainstream newspapers that may be of use for our readers. Abbreviations: NYT=New York Times, GW=Guardian Weekly, LAT=Los Angeles Times

Yemen: U.S.-backed Saudi airstrike murders kids on school bus

NYT, 8/16 — DAYAN, Yemen — The boys crammed into the bus,….fidgeted with excitement about the day's field trip….Hours later most of them were dead. During a stop for snacks…an airstrike by the Saudi-led coalition……blast[ed] the bus into a jagged mass of twisted metal and scattering its human cargo — wounded, bleeding and dead….

Yemeni health officials said 54 people were killed, 44 of them children, and many were wounded….[Yemen is] suffering through one of the world's worst humanitarian crises. The war has killed more than 10,000 people before the UN stopped updating the death toll two years ago.The strike also revived questions about…the United States' support for the campaign.

…Strikes have killed civilians at markets, weddings and funerals….The United States has sold billions of dollars in weaponry to allied coalition states, provided them with intelligence and refueled their bombers in midair….Defense contractor Raytheon has lobbied…to allow it to sell 60,000 precision-guided munitions to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates in deals worth billions of dollars….

…A metal fin…attached to the bomb….[had] writing…[that] indicated it was manufactured by General Dynamics and had been attached as a guidance system on a 500-pound bomb….Remnants of American-made weapons have frequently been found in the rubble of airstrikes in Yemen…. Abdul-Rahman al-Ejri…[whose] 11-year-old son Hassan…had been on the bus…was enraged that the coalition had said it carried military plotters….

He did not hesitate to assign blame."America is the head of evil, as well as the Saudi regime and the[ir] mercenaries," he said.

Shades of Ferguson. Australian cops murder Indigenous people

NYT, 8/18 — In one video, a black prisoner screams "I can't breathe" 12 times as he is pinned down by guards. In another, a police car swerves to run down a black teenager. As the young man has a seizure…the officers handcuff him rather than offer first aid. Reminiscent of…videos…shot in New York or Ferguson, Mo., they were taken in Sydney and Perth, Australia….Indigenous Australians are disproportionately targets of the police, increasing the likelihood of their arrest, abuse and imprisonment. Aboriginal peoples are incarcerated at 13 times the rate of non-Aboriginal Australians. They make up 27 percent of Australia's prisoners, compared with 3 percent of the overall population. Davis Dungay, Jr., a 26-year-old member of the Dunghutti people….[was] moved from one prison cell to another [saying] "I can't breathe…." He had schizophrenia, diabetes and asthma [and] later died in the prison's hospital.Shaun Harris's…niece, a 22-year-old Yamati woman….was arrested on charges related to unpaid fines but died in custody from septicemia and pneumonia after she was denied medical care.

South Africa's capitalism: pit toilets for kids, two drowned

NYT, 8/15 – Cape Town – A crippling sanitation backlog [exists] in schools, where two children recently drowned in pit toilets, the only facilities available for hundreds of thousands of children across the country….a crisis that has been brewing for years.Nearly 4,000 schools nationally have only pit toilets….In…South Africa's poorest province, one in four public schools has no other option for students to relieve themselves….

At the current rate…it would take around 19 years to replace all the pit toilets in South Africa's schools.The rollout of school infrastructure, including toilets, has been slowed by pervasive graft….Sanitation problems extended well beyond schools. "Where children don't have toilets in schools, they often go home and don't have access either," [Axolile Notywala] said.

Italy: Immigrant farmworkers strike vs. slave labor, deaths in crashes

NYT, 8/9 — Hundreds of migrant farmworkers walked off tomato fields in southern Italy…to protest their working conditions after two road accidents killed 16 African laborers….

"We are not slaves," the workers chanted as they marched in their red caps that protect pickers from the sun and have become a symbol of their battle against day-labor exploitation….

The workers who were killed came from North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa. They…produce millions of tons of tomatoes and a bare livelihood for thousands of migrant workers….This…allow[s] recruiters…and farmers to build a lucrative business on their backs….As the number of migrant day-laborers has increased, their already-low wages have dropped and many workers have been trapped in slave-like conditions….

Newscasts…showed…a rickety, overturned van…surrounded by scattered tomatoes and 12 bodies covered in white sheets. The images mirrored those…when another truck…slammed into a similarly unsafe van, killing four foreign workers and injuring others.

…Passengers had paid 5 euros ($5.80) to travel in a van originally equipped with nine seats….carrying 14 men. The van operated under a Bulgarian license plate, in order to save insurance money and avoid legal troubles….

"The two accidents were not chance," said Daniele Iacovelli, an official with…a union of agricultural and food workers….

Migrant workers…have long called for a public transportation system…so that laborers are not forced to use the middlemen's inhumane vans.

"The lack of such a system forces them to travel like animals," Mr. Iacovelli said….The migrants often live in shantytowns with no running water or electricity….inundated with mud when it rains and offer only metal sheets as protection against the sun.…[Workers earn] as low as 20 euros [$23) a day for 12-hour workdays picking tomatoes under the scorching summer sun…."Without them, we'd not eat tomatoes or zucchini in Italy anymore," Mr.

kkkops kill 15-year-old Steve

Fight for communism for the kids who die

CHICAGO—At least 100 workers, community members and many youth, have been organizing nightly in the Lawndale neighborhood on the west side of the city, to draw attention to the alleged "suicide" of 15-year-old Black teen Steven Rosenthal. He was murdered after a foot chase by the kkkops of the Chicago Police Department (CPD).

Comrades from Progressive Labor Party (PLP), our co-workers, and friends have taken an active role in building for and supporting the nightly rallies and connecting Steve's death to other racist attacks of the capitalist system, and the need for international communist revolution.

'Suicide' by kkkop

On the evening of Friday, August 17, Steve was stopped by the racist kkkops for questioning, for nothing more than being a Black youth in the path of the police. Steve took off on foot, and according to the CPD, shot himself in the back of the head while cornered in the stairwell of his grandmother's home.

The working-class residents of the area immediately converged to confront the kkkops and demand answers. Like always, the racist hit men put their crime scene on lockdown, pushing away and intimidating any community members present.

'Weaving words to smother the kids who die'

The CPD quickly put out a statement expressing their "condolences" over the tragic "suicide" of a young teen. The county medical examiner has corroborated with the killer cops by ruling the death to be self-inflicted.

But the working class is intelligent, and not so easily fooled. A talented and bright 15-year-old with no history of mental illness doesn't just suddenly decide to end his life, much less by putting a gun to the back of his own head. Several witnesses state that it was in fact the CPD that shot Steve in the stairwell. One of his friends even stated that she was on Facetime with him at the time the cops rolled up, and they were talking about what they were going to wear to a party that they were planning to meet up at that same night.

The fact that the CPD is refusing to release body camera footage or allow the family to view Steve's body makes it almost certain that he was murdered at the hands of the killer cops and their racist capitalist masters. He tragically joins a growing list of victims of racist police murder in the city, including Maurice Granton Jr. and Harith Augustus, two young Black workers executed by the CPD during the course of this summer alone.

Can't stop, won't stop the working class from fighting back

Although the racist capitalist bosses and their killer cops inflict so much violence on our class daily, what never ceases to inspire is the capacity and determination of workers to fight back. Steve's family and friends have succeeded in mobilizing dozens of other working-class fighters on a daily basis to rally in front of a local school, and to march and block traffic in front of the 10th District Police Station on Ogden Avenue. Their vow is to continue disrupting the bosses' "business as usual" for 30 days straight until the city starts giving answers and taking action over Steve's death.

PLP comrades have been honored to take leadership from these working-class fighters in their fight against racism and for justice. We have met and began building ties with his immediate family and other supporters. Those of us who work at the nearby hospital where Steve's body was first taken have struggled with our co-workers to participate in the rallies to support the family, fight back, and see this fight as their own.

Throughout our participation, we have been bold and unapologetic in blaming the racist capitalist system for Steve's death, and advocating for communist revolution as the only solution to ensure justice for all members of the international working class. We have linked his death to the increasing racism and fascism facing workers in the city, particularly Black and Latin workers, and the system's need to terrorize, divide, and weaken all working-class people in order to preserve their deadly profit system.

These attacks from the bosses are certain not only to continue but intensify as the capitalist system spirals even deeper into crisis. They can only be overcome by building a mass international multi-racial Red Army led by a PLP of millions that smashes the capitalist state and its racism, sexism, and inequality, and replaces it with a communist society run by workers that guarantees our needs and development.

Fight for the kids who die

"This is for the kids who die," begins a classic poem by Black communist poet Langston Hughes. We rise up in revolutionary struggle against racist capitalism, which can only offer death, misery, and alienation to the overwhelming majority of the world's workers, including 15-year-old children like Steve.

Justice for Steve! Fight for international communist revolution!✪

But the day will come—
Will raise for you a living monument of love,
And black hands and white hands clasped as one,
And a song that reaches the sky—
The song of the life triumphant
Through the kids who die.
(Langston Hughes)

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